

ALONG OLD TRAILS

By
WILLIAM
HASKELL
SIMPSON

‘The beauty of these poems is self-evident. Only Indians—and this poet—know how to say much in few words. One part of this poet lives in Chicago; the other part is at home in a country of which the far reaches of the Southwestern desert, the intimate life of its water-springs and *acequias*, are the visible symbols. . . In the desert’s timelessness, the most poignant questioning of destiny is met sometimes by a passionate realization of life; no one, I think, can read these poems without feeling that he has shared this experience.’ — *Alice Corbin Henderson.*

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By Alice Corbin Henderson

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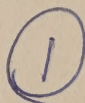


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ALONG OLD TRAILS

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*Poems of
New Mexico and Arizona*

BY

WILLIAM HASKELL SIMPSON



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THE beauty of these poems is self-evident. Only the Indians — and this poet — know how to say much in few words. One part of this poet lives in Chicago; the other part is at home in a country of which the far reaches of the Southwestern desert, the intimate life of its water-springs and *acequias* are the visible symbols.

To say more than this would be to exceed, in gossipy talk, the extraordinary brevity and insight of the poems. . . . In the desert's timelessness, the most poignant questioning of destiny is met sometimes by a passionate realization of life; no one, I think, can read these poems without feeling that he has shared this experience. 'Kin of bare beauty, with its million hurts,' is a line of one of the poems that expresses the spirit of them all.

ALICE CORBIN

PUEBLO FOLK

THE YEARS

ONLY the years go nowhere;
they sit in the plaza,
staring.

Who ever saw the years go anywhere?
they sit in the plaza,
mumbling.

GHOSTS

GHOSTS of the early earth!
The sly coyote knows you,
And the timid deer.
I asked the eagle, circling skyward.
And saw your twin shadows.
The fox looks everywhere
And calls you brother.

Was it your whisper,
Your mocking whisper,
Among the twisted cedars?

Or only the tired winds,
On the cool breasts of evening?

QUE ES?

FROM all the lassos of your many words
Something escapes.
All the corrals of your much saying
It jumps over.

I, Pancho, the sheep herder,
Know this. . . .

Thus to come to the soothing of silence —
Even as the no-words of a sheep herder,
His flock grazing.

DON FELICIANO GARCIA

Wood-Hauler

I, FROM the hills, Truchas way, driving three burros
with pinyon loads,
Look in the window, passing by that La Fonda, at
corner of old plaza.

(Hot is the sun at noon, and the miles are *muy lejos*.)

Por Dios! What does one see?

Me, of the proud name — of the casita by Truchas, on
the hills.

(Have you seen hollyhocks splendid in June, and heard
summer waters singing?)

What does one see?

That *pobrecito* of Tesuque — that Tewa of the little
valley, sitting at table, blowing smoke in their
faces —

DON FELICIANO GARCIA

In their faces, two fair faces of *señoras americanas*, who
blow back the smoke in the face of that *pobrecito*
— smiling, the three of them at nothing.

(Hot is the sun and the miles are *muy lejos*.)

And I, of the proud name, who drive burros with pinyon
loads —

I, who could say to them, bowing low, sombrero in hand:

‘At your feet,’ or ‘Kiss your hand.’ —

I, of the proud name. . . .

WINDOWS

WHAT are we, *Señor*,
Who look through curtained windows?

We are that which looks through window-eyes,
From inside outside —

Seeing more than the threshers on the mesa,
Hearing more than *muchachos* at play. . . .

Echoes of words you spoke last night,
They float off yonder, somewhere.

Shadows of week ago Monday
Reach out cool fingers and touch nobody. . . .

And what are we, *Señor*,
Who look through windows?

AT CORDOVA

I

At Cordova the high hills hump themselves;
they shoulder up and push the sky up.

At Cordova the adobes cling tight;
they hang on when the hills shoulder up;
they hang on tight and say: we ride with you,
O riding hills, all the way up,
to peak tops and cloud tops.
or, we ride with you all the way down —
to a singsong stream;
all the way to the weaving place. . . .

II

At Cordova the old men say:
we ride with you, O sliding hills;
we ride with you, up or down, zigzagging;
while the years last, we ride with you.

ALONG OLD TRAILS

At Cordova the springtime says:
we ride with you, O riding hills, all the way up;
and the summer-enders say: *
we ride with you all the way down.

III

At Cordova a high cross makes a prayer;
it makes a prayer to the God of high hills;
it makes one for Mary, for Joseph, for our dear
Christ.

At Cordova an old woman croons:
sí, sí, señor, I am keeper of keys that lock in.
follow me and I light you a candle;
follow me and I show you the pretty Virgin —
and *muchas mil gracias* for the silver you give.

At Cordova an old man whispers:
peace for sick souls,
and hollyhocks for beauty hunger.
quién sabe? no one knows.

AT CORDOVA

IV

At Cordova the adobes hang on tight.
and this you may see, with seeing eyes:
young hills, that push the sky up;
old hills, that slide down to a singsong river.
and this you may see, riding up or down:
José and María, who cross themselves;
they hug little Jesus María closer;
they stir the fire —
the smokes ride up with the high-riding hills. . . .

V

At Cordova is a long way up,
a long way down;
the high hills hump themselves;
they shoulder up and push the sky up,
they slide down to the river singsong.

PUEBLO FOLK

THE mountains keep silence.
The desert has no words.
And the long-time dead say nothing. . .

Are you, bare peaks,
Hot sands,
The dead?

TEOFILO — HE SAYS

Tesuque Pueblo

THE Knowing Ones know all —
but this much one may know himself,
when deep thoughts come:

Life is a one-thinking;
it was thought by Those Above,
it is of the always has been,
it is of the always will be.

My body — pouf — it goes out;
like pineknot flames it goes out,
like cigarette puffs it goes out.

But I, Teofilo, called *anciano*, very old,
I go home soon,
where forever spirits of wild plums bloom,
where rainbows bend over,
and eagle feathers mark a last trail. . . .

I go home!

CAVE MOTHER

PILE up smooth stones at the door,
To keep the night inside.

If the sun should peep in,
My little one —
New little one at the full breast —
You would want the sun for mother. . . .

QUIET

THE castaway body of Be-tchi-bnu —
it is covered up,
we cry and are afraid.

The Something that was Be-tchi-bnu —
it is uncovered,
and we shut our eyes for the shining.

The father-mother gods of the Below
comb their hair,
where the one sun shines not
and the four winds are stilled.

The eyes of the sunrise father and the
sunset mother see through all veils. . . .

Be-tchi-bnu keeps the silence.

MEDICINE MAN

FOR that trail into the beyond hills,
I give you shape of a lean pinto.

Do you not see it,
Pawing, whinnying? . . .

My magic cannot hold you,
When the earth turns half way.

My magic cannot call you back,
When the earth turns over.

DE NOCHE

O MOTHER of all the dark!
Draw near, on tiptoe,
Blindfold me, and say:
Go to sleep — to sleep — to sleep.

If only the hills of the night would stay
in their steadfast places —
They creep, like a she-panther, to where
I rest in the valley;
They come, down tumbling, to where I lie
on the pine boughs. . . .

The river runs away.
The aspens, by the runaway river,
are afraid.

PUEBLOCITO

GRAY burros, nodding,
Bound round with firewood.

Children of the brown eyes,
Who play in crooked lanes. . . .

A stream sings;
Its songs go with the strumming of guitars.

A girl sings;
Her songs go with the flying of pigeons.

My heart sings;
Because of all these things.

DIAS PASADOS

You touch hands,
You blow smoke rings. . . .

I hear you, Pedro,
Of the four-score years,
And this is what you say:

'Days of the past,
They were *muy bueno*;
And, *querida mia*,
You are so beautiful.'

I hear you, Carmencita,
Of the gray hair,
And you are saying:

'Days of the past,
They are gone, forever;

ALONG OLD TRAILS

And *querido mio*,
They are ours always. . . .

You touch hands,
You blow smoke rings.

FOOTPRINTS

AFTER burros pass, on a
dusty road . . .
footprints.

After you and I go down
the last trail . . .
footprints.

Brooms of the winds sweep
footprints
into dustheaps.

WAIT FOR ME, YEARS

Wait for me, years!
as I ride herd
toward sundown,
toward the corrals with bars down.
Wait for me, years!

You fly with the winds, years!
while I ride herd
to where the last corrals are —
bars down and the home whinny. . . .
You fly with the winds, years!

FONDISTA

FONDISTA, now we crave your cheer;
Our burros wait, the night is here.

Put fagots on the fading blaze,
And candles light — the saints we praise.

Fondista, fill you to the brim
These glasses, while the stars grow dim.

And let the cigarritos glow —
A friendly glass, before we go.

Come, join us, keeper of the inn.
We drink your health, your house within . . .

And God be with you, *hombres* all;
This house is yours, when next you call.

SIESTA

You of the wrinkled faces,
who nod and nap —

Tell us, what of love memories?
what of love remembering?

For now is it late,
and soon comes the forgetting. . . .

O half sleeps,
between the deep sleeps!

AND WHAT ARE YOU?

AND what are you, O cactus flower,
That red of campfire seems?
And what are you, O end-of-day,
That fades in aftergleams?

There is no answer desertward,
Save only this to know:
Though next new year this trail we pass,
Still gleams the afterglow —

Though next new year this very trail
We go, and call its name,
Yet everywhere the cactus buds
Burst into lava flame. . .

But what are you, O cactus flower? —
Fire red or white as snow,
And what are you, O end-of-day,
That fades in turquoise glow?

FAGOTS AND FLAMES

THE burros are come to town —
Much wearied thinking burro thoughts.

. . .

They know the slanting hill trails,
The dusty roads below,
And where cool wading places are.

Like driftwood drifting
They bear a hidden wonder,
Piled high and spilled sidewise.

They carry it home,
Thinking it is for woodpiles only,
Glad when their loads slip off.

Behold a marvel!
Fires lit and the night pushed back,
It is as if all sunsets met in sudden flame.

FAGOTS AND FLAMES

(White are the fagot ashes,
Windblown anywhere;
But sunset flames, who can forget?)

. . . .
At break of day the burros go —
Again they go for heaped-up loads. . . .

ADOBE

You, Pablo, of the little pines,
Top Truchas hill and skyward set,
Where snows melt late and floods are brown;

Where wind-wraiths lift the laggard dust,
And *niños* wait for your slow step,
Homecoming with the burro loads —

You, of the casa, low and old,
(As thus your fathers long ago,
At one with its squat earthiness) —

You say *muy bueno* and smoke on,
As all the stars swing cross the dark;
While I — while I — what can I say? . . .

For my half homes, what are they all,
But night-tents on a pilgrimage,
And strange hills when the night comes down!

CAMPO SANTO

INÉS, Anita, Tomás, José,
I sup with you, on my pilgrim way;

Craving the stillness of 'dobe walls,
And earth-floors trod by soft footfalls. . . .

Your campo santo is earthen, too;
With room for me, and room for you;

Little earth homes, for the weary — all,
Who seek their sleep by the 'dobe wall.

NUDE

EARTH, stripped by whippings of the
four winds —
uncovered to scorplings of the
one sun. . . .

Shape of a naked soul,
bareback.

BAREBACK

THE winds ride bareback,
Swinging lassos;

Their reins hang loose,
Their knees cling tight;

The trees bend down. . . .
Behind, rides the rain.

BURDENS

BURDEN of water jars,
Borne up steep trails;
Burden of babies,
Asleep in thonged cradles.

And a heaped-up load of loving,
Carried lightly,
Over all the trails
To the end of them.

TEWA SONG

ABOVE the lands,
Above the seas,
You see, you know,
All mysteries —
 Sun Old Man,
 Moon Old Man!

Would I could fly,
On widespread wing,
Where whirlpools are,
And flame-tips sing —
 Sun Old Man,
 Moon Old Man!

Die in the sea,
And rise at morn;
Thus would I go,
And thus be born —
 Sun Old Man,
 Moon Old Man!

KO-SHÁ-RE

VOICES of laughing waters
are we —

Long grasses in the wind
are we —

Beat of the hollow drums
are we.

From night of the si-pá-pu
we come —

From place of the beginning
we come —

For your delight
we come.

Those From Below
sent us —

That you may know laughter
they sent us —

That you may know delight
they sent us.

PUEBLO CRIER

FLOCKS of echoes, shivering;
And shadows, reaching.

Flocks of echoes, beyond,
Beating wings against red cliffs.

O-ai-e-o! O—ai—e—o!

We cannot push the dark back,
Over the rim.

Let all wings be folded;
The night puts us to sleep.

O-ai-e-o! O—ai—e—o!

HOPI MAIDEN

At the mealing stones
She sings butterfly songs.

Fly, yellow wings, with my love,
That has wings like your own.

Go, in golden shine of the sun,
Where the cornfields are. . . .

Yellow wings, you are my loving,
Home from the flight.

Somebody hoes the corn;
Heard you not his love for me?

HOPI LOVE SONGS

OR YOU

Was it a flute
At the spring
I heard?

Or moccasined winds
On the foot-trail
I heard?

Or you,
In my wonder-dream calling?

AS AN EAGLE

As an eagle .
Strikes its great wings
Against the storm-drums,
Against their thunders —

As an eagle
Smooths its wet wings

ALONG OLD TRAILS

Above the thunder-drums,
On hills always shining —

So I beat my breast,
I plant prayer plumes;
That your always-loving
May hear my cry.

IF I WERE DAWN-YELLOW

Cream flowers of yucca,
Red of bisnaga —
She puts them
In her raven hair.

Yellow of dawn,
Flame of sundown —
She puts them
In her black hair. . . .

O, if I were dawn-yellow,
If I were sunset-red —
In the hid nest
Of her dark hair!

HOPI SPRING SONG

I HAVE a body;
It is mine to dance with.

I looked at my body
In the water pools,
When the rains came.

A whispering said:
You are made for loving,
You are made for desiring. . . .

I have a body;
It is mine to sing with.

ACOMA KIVA CHANT

WE are the two — of earth home, of sky home —
beautiful they are . . .
sing to them this singing.

The Father-Sky made us — the Mother-Earth made us;
we are their children . . .
sing to them this singing.

We know not the way of life — Those Above
are the all knowing . . .
sing to them this singing.

O flower that we see! And eagle that we see —
you are of earth and sky . . .
sing to them this singing.

O fading flower! And eagle of weary wings —
we go to the sky place with you . . .
sing to them this singing.

PAPOOSE

TIGHT across the old squaw's back,
Laugh, cuddle up —
It is the last ride you take.

Hands beckon
From spirals of smokes,
Back of the years. . . .

It is the last ride you take.

HOZHONJI SONG

HOLA! Hola!

Why run away, summer stream?
The coyote will not drink you up.
Why fade away, summer flower?
The sun needs to look at you.

Hola! Hola!

Come back, summer stream.
Tell us what you saw, asleep.
And you, O summer flower,
Where have you been, asleep?

If you do not come again,
We sit by the ashes, lonely.
If you stay away always,
Our eyes forget you.

UNDER-WORLD

Down below is si-pá-pu —
Phantom footsteps in dawn-dew.

Who come out, with wonder eyes,
Must return — the chiefs are wise.

Spider Woman knows — rap, rap.
Skeletonman knows — tap, tap.

Mocking-bird has naught to say,
Though the four winds blow that way. . . .

Si-pá-pu waits, far below;
If you come or if you go.

HOMESICK SONG

SAID the very old man at the drum:
It is a homesick song —

Of lonely deserts,
Of grinding the corn,
Of a roof overhead,
The love of woman;
Of the Path to the Sunset,
Where we go to-morrow.

Ah! then I knew;
Knew why it sang in my heart.

TAOS DRUMS

I HAVE crouched in your kivas by night;
Kept step with your dancers by day;
Wrapped myself in your garments of white,
And laughed with your maidens at play.

Your songs have I sung, and your drums
Have I beaten in rhythmic tattoo;
Have eaten your feast and your crumbs —
Yet never in truth have known you.

There's a door no one may unlatch,
A silence that speaks not at all,
A music the ear fails to catch,
And a mist that shuts down like a pall.

With your flocks safe in fold, from the steeps
You watch the stars glow in the blue.
There's a hush in the deeps beyond deeps
That is kin to the hush within you!

YUCCA IS YELLOWING

Yucca is yellowing;
Hello, yellow!
Cactus is crimsoning;
Glow, glow, red fellow!
And in the mesquite bush is seen
A splash of green —

As when sunset colors spill
Their beauty down an evening hill.

No one rides the trail to-day —
Who cares, if strange or lonely?
No one goes the desert way —
It is for beauty only.

ALONG OLD TRAILS

LOS LLANOS

AGAIN, O plains!
I go your windswept ways,
With Indian, trapper, trader, pioneer —
Gray shadows all
On gray grass.

I am companioned, —
(Miracle most strange,) —
By youth
And its high dreams. . . .

So new,
The billows of your grass —
So new,
Your breezes, born each morn.

But old,
So old,
The ghosts that pass.

EL CAMINO

HERE is the road — yours, mine. . . .

Birds in the cedars, and the new flowers
they sing to.

(A song of flutes from shade of low cedars,
and a something that spring makes
out of the dust.)

Coyote and bobcat, they watch the road
and those who pass over it.

They watch from eye-slits the shadows of those
who again go the earth ways. . . .

So, here is the road, the choke-dust of it —
long reach of long tracks that rimward
dip over —

Yours, mine.

RIDING BY

MADRE DE DIOS! cross yourself, Manuel!
the wires talk,
they whisper this song:

It is fine to sit astride witches' broomsticks
and ride by;

It is fine to ride with black clouds
of the storm.

Old-man-of-the-years runs after you,
reaping with his scythe, Manuel,
with his whetted scythe, Chiquita.

SIGNAL FIRES

SMOKE of signal fires,
Beckoning. . . .

Where they died away,
I see only
Pale ashes,
Scattered by the winds.

Where their firebrands were,
I see only
A lean coyote, hungry,
Against the new moon.

Where their message was,
I see only
Stars of the new night —
Beckoning.

RAIN IN THE HILLS

WERE I the rain
Coming over the hills —

I should be glad
That my cool fingers could ease little fevers
 of dusty waterholes,
And caress curled leaves of the cottonwoods.

The herd,
Pawing, bellowing, would let me quiet them,
 standing in fresh pools
By dusty waterholes. . . .

If I were the rain
Coming over the hills.

BACK TRAIL

I SEEM to think again
the slipping shadow
of a something —
when?
where?

The desert has memory
of a long journey,
back trail,
beyond the last turn
of the remembering.

AS WATERS RAN

As waters ran, there went the twisting trails;
Old paths of deer, of scout and emigrant —

And now, wide ways where roll the caravans;
New ways of steel and smooth long roads of stone. . . .

Yet sing the waters as of old they sang;
And I, man grown, hands holding still too much,

Am eager boy again, as waters run —
A youth once more, upon the shut-in road.

NAVAJO

Your desert land is —
An old squaw,
Crooning old words
Beside dead embers of old thoughts.

What she has told you
Is not told to me,
Though I ask.

Your desert land is —
Coyote,
Running alongside white horses
As the wolves howl.

What it has found out, running,
Is not told to me,
Though I ask.

SADDLE

HASTIN DOT KLISH, just Navajo,
Of lonesome place, Chilchinbito —

'Tis you in truth that I would be;
Good-bye to towns, their jest with me.

A horse, a blanket, a smoke or two;
Foot into stirrup and off with you. . . .

Chuska hills, and the Chinle trails;
Shiprock, waiting to spread its sails;

That lonely place, Chilchinbito —
With shooting stars, slip loose, let go!

APACHE

I

NAKED, they ride
into the sunset;

Fling from bent bow, taut string,
the last feathered arrows.

A mocking cry
and gallop of hoof beats —

Swish of feathered arrows,
curving earthward. . . .

II

Gone from the lava beds,
from the high passes, the trails.

Yet again, a cry . . .
and gallop of hoof beats,
back of the sunsets.

IT CALLS YOUR NAME

Sioux and Cheyenne, Arapahoe;
Or any tribe that faced the foe;
Or any tribe that soon must go. . . .

From bluff to bluff the signals flame.
But one is left; it calls your name,
To take the way the horsemen came.

And O as nakedly to go
As go the winds, that all day blow,
And all night in the hills lie low.

VAQUERO

At sunup the roundup —
To ride and to ride
Where prairies are wide.

At noonup the camp —
Saddles off, foam-damp;
Hats off, hair windblown,
And tired to the bone.

Low bars of pasture gates,
Let down at sundown —
A gallop, a dust cloud, pell-mell;
And whinny of pintos across the corral.

Ended the riding,
Hushed the rush and the cry. . . .
They have lit the home-ranch lights
Up in the sky.

EL CAÑON GRANDE

BACK TRACK

THE river gnaws, and the winds and rain —
For seas shall cover the land again,

And you shall back track, in the tireless swing,
When the sea-beds lift with a mighty fling. . . .

To the furred lynx-cats all has been told —
They purr and purr as the spring grows old.

TRAIL

THEY ride beside us, up the trail —
making no footprint in the snow,
making no voice to stir the air,
making no shadow in the sun.

Up, up and out, from deeps below —
and where they ride into the night,
and where they camp, you cannot know;
though all trails lead from somewhere, home.

PRIMAL

AND you, for first time looking or the last —
stranger of other breed and time —
you too belong.

Here, where red rock is gashed to granite,
and gnaws the river-wolf;
Here, where that you are floats out and out
and sisters with the vast.

For this is more than rock and air,
than hands may touch,
or eyes may think they see. . . .

Kin of bare beauty, with its million hurts.

GRAND CANYON

LET the sunsets paint it,
And the rainbows.

Let the pueblos whisper of it —
Voices of long ago.

Let the red river sing of it —
A wild thing, escaping.

GRAND CANYON AGAIN

I

WITH EVENING GLOW

With evening glow
And paintbox of the rainbow —

With bite of winds
And grind of the river —

With earth-shock
And the patter of raindrops —

Thus was it made,
Unmade and made again, again. . . .

O slowness of the drip and drip —
O lagging of the years and years!

II

BACK OF ALL SILENCES

Back of all silences and our tears,
We see the slow shadow of You —

ALONG OLD TRAILS

Who work with the winds and earth-shocks;
Of You, who work with raindrop patter.

They are the fingers of your long weaving,
And fleet feet of your long journeying.

SHADOW SCOUTS

FILES of shadows scouting come,
Without any tap of drum.

Night-camp in the night abyss;
Place no sentries — only this:

Walls that shoulder up, until
Six stars hang on a windy hill.

EL PUENTE ABAJO

FLING threads of steel across the stream,
And clamp them tight on either shore.
A spider web, spun thin, they seem —
Above the prisoned river's roar.

The pack mules crawl from side to side,
Their steps unused to pathless air.
And higher yet the eagles glide,
On paths unbridged and trackless stair. .

And higher yet they go, who wait
The white moon-ship above the trees.
And farther fare they, soon or late,
Who take the trail that no man sees.

FINIS

THERE'S a new grave,
On the Canyon rim;
The moon hangs above it,
Young and slim.

There's a new grave,
By the river side —
To the far top
You must ride and ride.

High on the rim,
Where the winds are free;
By the tawny flood
And a lone pine tree.

SUN-DOWN-SHINING

BUTTERFLY WING

I GIVE you a butterfly wing.
Tell me how it happened;
I will tell you something true about death,
About life,
And the loving of life and of death.

It is all in a song I thought of,
And could not sing. . . .
No one ever has sung it.

Wings spread for last flight, before the
 early snows — a bird gave me two notes,
 for beginning and end.

Try for the rest of it
In a butterfly wing.

SUN-DOWN-SHINING

I FORGET these things —
 where a trail begins,
 where a trail ends.

I forget these things —
 white of dawn,
 and sun-going-down.

I forget these things —
 hunger for piki,
 thirst for the springs. . . .

But I forget not
 You, O beloved,
 with the night.

THINGS

THOSE things we thought were ours,
slip through,
when folded hands can hold no more. . . .

Who cares?

RECUERDO

ALL the slow way to the last-good-bye place,
And home again. . . .

My unavailing tears on your pale still face;
And on the fields, rain.

AND IS IT YOU?

WHEN April comes along the way;
Or any green of sudden leaf;
Or any loveliness, new-spun —

O call you now, from furrowed fields?
Dear child, of time that is no more!
And is it you who walk with Spring?

O speak you low, from under foot?
Sweet child, of days that are no more!
And is it you the arbutus brings?

REMEMBERED FACES

THOSE left behind
Weep,
For one who goes away
Alone —
Their hands reach out. . . .

Strange!
That I, going away,
Do not weep;
That I smile
At the remembered faces.

PITY NOT

PITY not the dead;
They are comforted.

Should they wake not,
All is forgot.

If they rise again,
Love folds them then.

GOOD MORNING, GOD

Good morning, God!

And how do you do?
On our way from the clod
To a sense of you.

Good morning, God!

As my soul breaks through
The sleep of the sod —
And it calls to you.

Good morning, God!

There's a song for you
Where the weary plod —
And it sails the blue.

Good morning, God!

This a fool may do,
When the first flowers nod
In the sun to you.

BEYOND

I

WHERE did you go,
And what did you see —
On the new trod road
From Calvary?

What did you see,
And where did you go —
That night when they
Had laid you low?

II

We do not know. . .
But you smiled, they say,
On the backward road
From yesterday.

We do not know. . .
But they say your face
Shone with a glow
From some far place.

DUST

THOUGHTS of the dust of the road —
Listen, listen!

Once it was stubble;
And leaps in the legs of a collie,
 hunting in the stubble;
And love in the heart of a girl, by the
 fire, where a collie lies, dozing. . . .

Dust blows everywhere —
Looking — looking.

SPHINX

I KNOW the answer
To the unanswered —

What to say
When a child asks about God;

The riddle
Of love;

About beginnings,
Endings. . . .

But I tell not,
Now or to-morrow.

ASLEEP

HANDS that reach out to touch the dark,
along paths of last year,
on the way to a sleep place
somewhere. . . .

The going to sleep of the night.

The glow that spans the sky
and rests on hills of dawn —

Like smiles on dead lips
for that little while —
or gleams of candles,
the sunblaze gone.

GOOD-BYE, SOUL

You and I, proud of ourselves,
whirled on the earth-top,
set spinning
when Time was a lad. . . .

To slip off this earth-top,
(set spinning when Time was a lad,)
and adventure beyond bounds —

Good-bye and good luck,
soul!

FOR THE DEAR DEAD

FOR the dear dead, room!
As they tiptoe back
On the creek-fringe track,
When the redbuds bloom.

We would call their name
On the creek-fringe way —
(What their pale lips say?)
When the redbuds flame.

We would somewhat learn
Of the roads they go —
For we miss them so,
When the redbuds burn.

O we miss them so!
On the creek-fringe way
Out of yesterday,
When the redbuds glow.

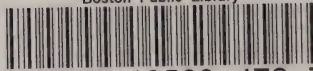
LOVED LITTLE TOWN

THE loved little town
Where I was born.

A trod pathway,
An old doorway,
Prairie winds among the many maples,
The curve of the river,
And long shadows of the guard of the hills. . . .

I reach out eager hands;
They clasp nothing.

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